

Fun and Functional Apps for Parents

Although mobile phones get a bad rap when used inappropriately, there's no doubt that the technology has impacted our lives in many positive ways, especially for parents. Beau Turner, a software entrepreneur and father of two, told us about a few locally designed fun and functional apps for parents to download to their phone.

Beau developed the "Fun for Kids: Activities for Your Family" app for himself and other parents looking for activities to do with their kids. Beau used to travel a lot for his job. He would leave on Sundays and return on Fridays. When he was home with the kids on the weekends, he found there was a disconnect because he didn't know what to do with them, what they liked or didn't like because he was gone so much.

The "Fun for Kids: Activities for Your Family" app offers over 200 fun and easy activities, crafts, games and entertainment for kids of all ages. From coordination and motor skills to language and thinking skills, you will always have something to capture children's interest. Each topic is numbered and there are categories displayed with each entry giving you details on suggested price, location and age range. You can search for activities using any of those tags or by items you have on hand. It also has a feature that enables you to randomly view a new activity. Find something you like? Mark it as a favorite and shake it again to see what comes up next.

Beau also shared information about a functional app designed by another local dad that can help parents with autistic kids. Many families with autistic children have difficulty communicating with them. Beau's friend, Joe Hill, designed the "Aeir Talk" app so that he could talk with his son who had never said anything to him before. By using this app, his son can press a picture and Joe's voice says the word. If his son wants a banana, he can press the picture of a banana and the device vocalizes that for him. Aeir Talk, soon to be renamed "Snap and Say", has changed Joe's relationship with his son.

Beau has also created a game called "Zombie Tag Challenge" with a new company he co-founded called Reality Bridges. "Zombie Tag Challenge" is a real life game of tag played with your mobile device keeping score. You create your own map on your device and it shows real-time gps movement of all the players. Games can last 5, 10 or 20 minutes and are over when the timer gets to zero or everyone is turned into a Zombie. The game is child-friendly, so Beau encourages families to get outside and enjoy gaming in the real world! Parents can even use it to make a virtual scavenger hunt for their kids. Unlike the Wii or Kinect game stations, "Zombie Tag Challenge" gets your kids up and moving outside of the house while still allowing them to play with their gadgets.

All of these apps are compatible with iPhone, iTouch, iPad and Android devices. They are only \$0.99 or less, so give them a try to add a little app fun and function to your life as a parent. To learn more about these apps, contact Beau at 513-3502 or www.zombietag.net.